Effect of life review with patients and family on palliative care nurses’ practice and views about life-and-death

Purpose

• Life review is suggested to have a positive effect on end-of-life patients and family members, however, few studies have reported its effect on the nurses who conduct the reviews. We explored the effects of conducting these life reviews on nurses’ care and their views about life-and-death.

Methods

• Following ethics review semi-structured interviews of five palliative care nurses who had experiences of providing life review therapy were conducted. The data were analyzed qualitatively by KJ Method and transcribed contents were categorized.
Results
• The mean age of the participants was $42.6 \pm 9.7$ years and the mean length of work in the palliative care ward was $7.0 \pm 4.4$ years. Four categories were extracted from the interviews:
  1. Desire to complete
     - Clarify what they actually remained undone and assist them to complete their desires
     - Forward patients’ words to the family members to promote their grief work.
     - Make a timely nursing intervention
  2. Differing perspectives
     - Effect of life review
     - Insufficient understanding of life review technique
     - Different perspective towards life review therapy
  3. Views about life and death
     - Learn from patients how to make a medical choice and how to spend the end stage of life
     - Nurses’ attitude towards their own family would not change
  4. Deeper understanding
     - Development of reliability leads to deeper understanding of the patients and finding better way to deal with them

Discussion
• Nurses provided as much care as possible to assist realizing the patient and family member’s wish through life review therapy. Perhaps nurses’ knowledge that most patients are close to death influences them to strongly wish to realize patients’ wishes, and affects their nursing care. Nurses always face the death of patients, learn from patients how to make a medical choice, and how to spend the end stage of their own life.

• These experiences influenced their view of life-and-death, however, because they have not experienced the immediacy of death in their own family, their attitude towards their own family did not change.

• Nurses recognized the positive effects of life review. These included patient and family being able to respect the patient’s way of life and being able to forget pain and suffering, while they were not confident with conducting life review therapy because they had not confirm the actual effects that patients and family felt.

• Life review brought out into the open patients’ real feelings and wishes, which helped nurses develop a better understanding of patients, provide individual nursing care, and deepen the trusting relationship with patients.
Conclusion

- Life review with patients and their family members influenced nurses' practice and view about life-and-death. They strongly wished to assist patients and family to complete their unachieved wishes and desires, however, they were not confident with the actual effects of life review because they have not had confirmation of the benefits from patients or their families. Proving life review therapy affected nurses' views on life-and-death and nurses had deeper understanding and developed more trusting relationships with patients and family members.

Table 1. Influences of life review with patients and family on nurses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Desire to complete</td>
<td>Clarify what they actually remained undone and assist them to complete their desires</td>
<td>I want to help patients realize what they want to do so as not to regret later</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Information sharing among staff and practice of team medical care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clarify patient’s regrets through reminiscence and provide as much care as possible to remove the regrets</td>
<td>Clarity of patient’s regrets through reminiscence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide information to family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Differing perspectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of life review technique</td>
<td>Not sure if I am providing a correct life review therapy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Different perspective towards life review therapy</td>
<td>Sometimes life review makes patients feel pain</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>It would be ideal to perform life review therapy even in the general ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Views about life and death</td>
<td>Learn from patients how to make a medical choice and how to spend the end stage of life</td>
<td>I myself wish not to regret anything before death</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>By knowing the life of patients in palliative care ward, I think about my preferable medical choice and how to spend the end stage of my life.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nurses’ attitude towards their own family would not change</td>
<td>Attitudes towards patients and those towards my own family are different.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4. Deeper understanding

Development of reliability leads to deeper understanding of the patients and finding better way to deal with them.

I could develop trusting relationship with patients and family and they started to tell me many thing.

Thank you very much!